

Town of Odessa

NOTICE & AGENDA

TREE COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday May 9, 2023

7:00 p.m.

Old Academy Building

315 Main Street

Odessa, DE 19730

In Person

Call to Order

Chairwoman Melaine Minear called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Roll Call

Commission members Michael Callaghan, Melaine Minear, Jeff Pyle and Quentin Schlieder were present. A quorum was present.

Consideration of Minutes from the April 11, 2023 Meeting

Chairwoman Melaine Minear inquired if there were any additions or corrections to the Minutes of April 11, 2023. Commissioner Michael Callaghan noted that his surname included a “g” which had been omitted. The correct spelling is Callaghan.” Secretary Schlieder noted the change and apologized for the error. Chairwoman Minear entertained a motion to approve these Minutes as corrected. Commissioner Jeff Pyle moved to approve the Minutes of the March 14, 2023 meeting as corrected. Commissioner Michael Callaghan seconded the motion which was adopted unanimously by voice vote.

Recognition of Visitors

No visitors were present at the meeting, although Chairwoman Minear advised that two guests may attend later during the meeting.

Old Business

Arbor Day Celebration – Sunday, April 30, 2023 at 3:00 p.m.

Unfortunately, the 2023 Arbor Day event had to be cancelled due to inclement weather. The White Oak was planted, mulched and staked the Wednesday prior to the event and the plaque was installed. Secretary Schlieder distributed copies of the printed program to members of the Commission. A sign was posted at the site, respondents to the invitation were notified by telephone and announcements were posted advising of the cancellation. Announcements also were posted on the Town website and on the Odessa Delaware Tree Log Facebook page. Chairwoman Minear notified Pastor Ray of the cancellation and was present at the site of the planting from 2:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. She distributed programs and complimentary plants provided by the Delaware Forest Service at the planting site on Sunday, April 30, 2023. A few intrepid individuals, including Jeff Pyule and Carol Sheats did show up. A few publicity photographs were taken to promote future events. Taryn Davidson advised that the remainder of the plants provided by the Forest Service could be distributed at the May Fair Event on May 6, 2023 at the Corbit-Calloway Library. Chairwoman Minear reported that all of the plants had been claimed by 1:00 p.m.

Secretary Schlieder suggested that future weather dependent events should include a rain date and information on how the public and invitees can check to see if the event is cancelled.

A date for the presentation of the certificate for John Goodier was coordinated with Mayor Smith, and the presentation took place at his residence. Secretary Schlieder circulated a copy of the photograph of the presentation with Mr. Goodier, Mayor Smith and Chairwoman Minear. Carole Coleman served as photographer for the occasion. State Senator Hansen is expected to present the Resolution commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the Town of Odessa's Charter from the State of Delaware at the June 5, 2023 Council Meeting.

Safety Pruning at Municipal Park – Tree, Inc. LLC Status Report

Secretary Schlieder reported that Tree, Inc removed the three dangerous trees overhanging the paved path at Odessa Memorial Park on West Main Street on Wednesday May 3, 2023.

Secretary Schlieder and Chairwoman Minear inspected the contractor's work and sent an email with photographs to members of the Commission and Town of Odessa Secretary Amy Marie Ottinger on Friday, May 5, 2023.

Secretary Schlieder noted that overall, the work complied with the specifications in the proposal, although having the work performed following the recent rain events and the resulting saturated soils did result in minor damage to the turf. He recommended that the current landscape contractor who maintains the lawn use a metal landscaping rake to even out some of the deeper depressions. Tree, Inc. did broadcast seed over the disturbed areas, and after a few mowings the depressions will probably be negligible. He also noted a few minor stubs from broken limbs resulting from the felling of the trees, but again these are minor, especially when taken in the context of the many stubs remaining from earlier pruning projects. From his perspective Tree, Inc. performed the work in a satisfactory manner, however, if Mayor Smith or Secretary Ottinger are concerned about the ridges and depressions, he suggested they might want to call these to Tree, Inc. attention and withhold payment pending repairs. He noted, however, that he believed it would be preferable to have the lawn contractor (Precision) even out the depressions. He estimated that it should not take more than a half an hour to make the repairs.

Facebook Page – Odessa Delaware Tree Log

Secretary Schlieder reported that he has continued to add appropriate announcements and content to the Odessa Delaware Tree Log Facebook page. He noted that it would helpful if Commission members could invite other Town residents to join and follow the group.

Halfway to Arbor Day Garden Party Fundraiser

Secretary Schlieder reported that Town Secretary Ottinger has not sent the amended ordinance to the Town Solicitor for review. She advised that she had other priorities. He inquired when the proposed amendments might be forward to attorney Barrett Edwards for review and be included on the Town Council's agenda for consideration. She would not commit to a schedule.

Secretary Schlieder noted that he would not recommend raising funds for the Tree Commission until the Town enacts the ordinance which provides a dedicated fund for the receipt of donations. He stated that it was challenging to credibly plan for the Halfway to Arbor Day Garden Party fundraiser this year given this unforeseen delay, and recommended that the event be deferred

until 2024. Commissioner Jeff Pyle moved to defer the proposed Halfway to Arbor Day Garden Party fundraiser until October 2024. Commissioner Michael Callaghan seconded the motion which was adopted unanimously by voice vote.

Chairwoman Minear noted that the Woman's Club of Odessa had donated a check for \$250.00 to support the Commission's work planting trees. She returned the check to Commissioner Pyle suggesting that the Woman's Club might reimburse costs for the planting of a tree at the appropriate time.

Inventory and Mapping

Secretary Schlieder noted that now that Arbor Day event on April 30, 2023 has passed and the spring trees are planted, he plans to begin the inventory on East Main Street from the Appoquinnimink River west to Route 13 North. He plans to allocate between 2-3 hours weekly. He noted that he will require copies of the maps prepared by the Forest Service in order to proceed with the project. Chairwoman Minear agreed to request the plans and to have copies made at the UPS Store in Middletown. Secretary Schlieder offered to pay for the copies.

Amendment of Ordinance Nos. 2002-1/2005-3 – Status Report

As noted earlier in the meeting, the Town has not submitted the proposed amendments of Ordinance Nos. 2002-1/2005-3 to the Town Solicitor Barret Edwards for review and comment nor have they committed to a proposed schedule for consideration by the Odessa Town Council. Secretary Schlieder noted that he was very discouraged by the Town's inaction on this matter, especially given what seemed to be a favorable reaction from Mayor Smith at the meeting on April 6, 2023.

Recruitment of Volunteers/Scout and Odessa High School Outreach

Chairwoman Minear advised that due to the busy event schedule in April and May, the Volunteer recruitment initiative is on hold.

Pruning Workshop – Tuesday, June 6, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Secretary Schlieder prepared rack cards promoting the June 6, 2023 pruning workshop which were distributed at the May 6, May Fair event at the Corbit- Calloway Library. Posters also have been submitted to Town Secretary Amy Marie Ottinger for posting on the Town website, at the Old Academy Building and the Kiosk at the Post Office. The event also has been posted on the Odessa Delaware Tree Log Facebook Page.

2024 Delaware Urban Forestry Grant Application - East Main Street Proposal

Secretary Schlieder advised that he plans to provide a draft schedule and letter to affected residents regarding the proposed East Main Street project to be submitted to the Delaware Forest Service grant for the Tree Commission's review and discussion at its June 13, 2023 meeting.

Planting of *Nyssa sylvatica* 'Green Gable' and *Ginkgo biloba* 'Autumn Gold'

Secretary Schlieder reported that *Nyssa sylvatica* 'Green Gable' in memory of Henry Francis Stewart along Fourth Street on the Old Academy site and *Ginkgo biloba* 'Autumn Gold' in memory of "Angel" at 403 High Street were planted on Monday May 8, 2023. He thanked

Chairwoman Minear for submitting the request to obtain clearance from Miss Utility to proceed with the project. Chairwoman Minear acknowledged the efforts of Jason Kokotaylo of Clayton, DE in planting these trees.

New Business

Commissioner Jeff Pyle expressed concern over a precedent of the Town addressing tree and sidewalk maintenance. Secretary Schlieder offered to research the matter further, however, he recalled that Ordinance No. 2002-1 addresses the tree maintenance issue and assigns the responsibility to the Commission. He will provide clarification at the June 13, 2023 meeting. Commissioner Callaghan also recalled that the ordinance has a section which addresses this matter.

Chairwoman Melaine Minear reported that she staffed a table promoting the Odessa Tree Commission at the May Fair on Saturday, June 6, 2023 at the Corbit- Calloway Library. A photograph of the exhibit was circulated. Copies of the Commission's brochures and two brochures provided by Taryn Davidson of the Delaware Forest Service were available to the public. The remainder of the plants provided by the Delaware Forest Service were distributed to interested visitors. As noted previously, copies of the rack card promoting the June 6, 2023 and the problems with English ivy also were distributed. Copies of the card were provided to each Commissioner. There was a great response to the Tree Commission's exhibit. Chairwoman Minear contributed the fee for the space.

Secretary Schlieder reported that the cool wet spring has caused a severe outbreak of Sycamore Anthracnose, a fungal disease specific to sycamores, including the iconic American Sycamore often featured in Andrew Wyeth's paintings. The disease abates when the weather grows warmer and drier, and use of fungicides is generally not necessary. He prepared a fact sheet which is available to residents who are concerned about their trees. Copies were provided to each Commissioner and will be provided to residents who have Sycamores growing on their properties.

Chairwoman Minear expressed her appreciation to Commissioner Michael Callaghan for making the arrangements for opening the building for this evening's Odessa Tree Commission meeting.

Secretary Schlieder advised that he mailed a letter to Mayor Smith on May 2, 2023 that I will be retiring following the August 8, 2023 meeting. This advanced notice hopefully will provide an opportunity for the Town to find and designate an appropriate replacement, and will allow Secretary Schlieder to serve through the summer to assure that the trees planted in Spring 2023 survive. He also advised Mayor Smith that after August he would be happy to assist on occasion with projects as requested.

Commissioner Callaghan advised that he was resigning from the Odessa Tree Commission effective this evening. He offered to continue assisting with the inventory mapping project. Chairwoman Minear thanked him for his service to the Commission and wished him well.

Chairwoman Minear advised that she, too, will be concluding her work with the Odessa Tree Commission effective with the August meeting, since she is disappointed that the Town has

indicated that the Commission and its work is not a priority. She hopes to continue her field work pruning trees with Carol Sheats and maintaining the trees planted this Spring. She will be advising Mayor Smith of her decision in the near future.

Next Meeting Date and Time

Chairwoman Minear reminded the Commission that the next meeting of the Odessa Tree Commission will be held on Tuesday, June 13, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at Town Hall.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairwoman Melaine Minear adjourned the meeting at 7:39 p.m. on the motion of Commissioner Michael Callaghan which was duly seconded by Commissioner Jeff Pyle and adopted unanimously by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted

Quentin C. Schlieder Jr.
Secretary